

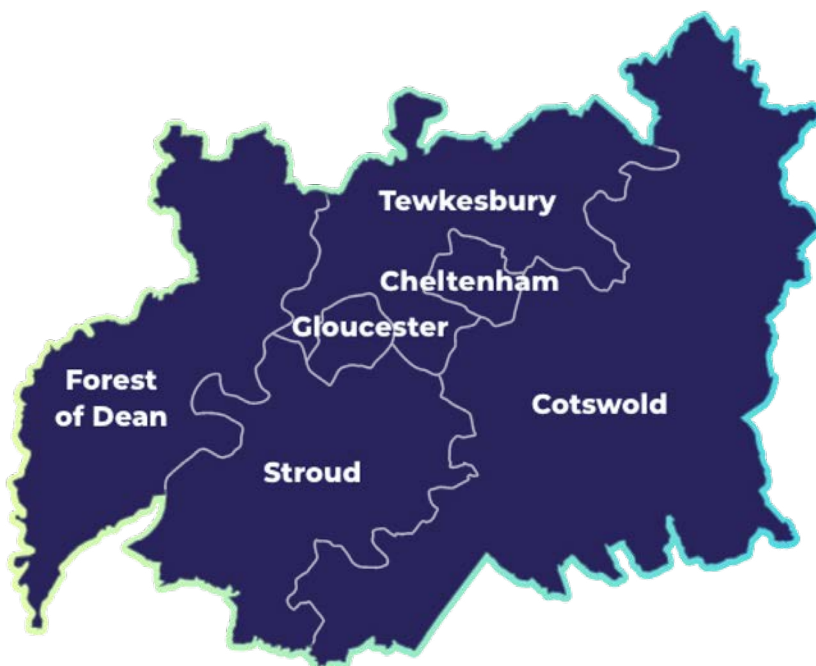


Annual Report 2020-21

On equal terms
Then and now

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Healthwatch Gloucestershire is your health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other health and social care decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

Message from our Chair

Positive response to a challenging year

This has been an unprecedented and challenging 12 months. There has been a phenomenal response from local health and care services, as well as local people who have made sacrifices to protect themselves and others as the COVID-19 pandemic took its course. Gloucestershire's roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has been world class.

Meeting people's needs

During this period, Healthwatch Gloucestershire has had a significant and changing role. Initially, we provided reliable and reassuring information and signposting to support the public. As the pandemic shone a light on cracks in the health and care system, we investigated which areas were working well and which were struggling, to help services understand and respond to meet people's needs.

The pandemic emphasised inequalities of experience, showing us that different people need to be helped in a way that works for them. It also highlighted the need for more joined up working with our diverse communities, to allow the voices of all people to lead conversations and actions.

Using public feedback to drive change

I'm proud of the work we have done this year. We have listened to local people and followed through with work that has enormous potential to improve individuals' experiences of health and care. The response from Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to our Mental Health A&E report should be celebrated. Our work around access to dental services and GPs is more complicated, but our recommendations are being taken seriously. We are looking forward to using the wealth of learning from the last year to continue to shape and improve the local services that people want and deserve.



Thank you

Finally, I would like to thank the Healthwatch Gloucestershire team; they have worked creatively, tirelessly and with warmth during a demanding year. I would also like to thank our volunteers who have continued to support our work, despite their own challenges, and the board who have conquered the foibles of Zoom and continued to steer the organisation.

Nikki Richardson
Chair, Healthwatch Gloucestershire Board



"Healthwatch Gloucestershire's dedicated team of staff and volunteers have continued to work throughout the pandemic to listen to what people like about local health and social care services, and what could be improved. They have proved themselves to be flexible and adaptable...and have enabled positive changes in our health and social care system at a time when all services have experienced unprecedented demands and pressures."
Helen Flitton, Head of Commissioning (Drugs and Alcohol and Domestic Abuse), Gloucestershire County Council

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Gloucestershire. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference that their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health and care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



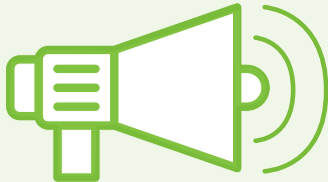
"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

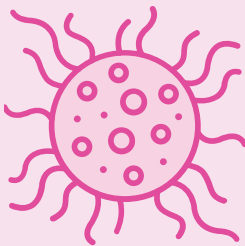
Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



This year we heard from
1,594 people
about their experiences of health and social care.
We provided advice and information to
770 people

Responding to the pandemic



In total, we engaged with and supported
2,364 people this year;
1,412 of these were COVID-19 related comments and enquiries.

Making a difference to care



We published
6 reports about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.
From this, we made
27 recommendations for improvement.

Health and care that works for you



50 volunteers helped us to carry out our work.
In total, they contributed
71 days
We employ
4 staff, 50% of whom are full-time equivalent.
We received
£209,908 in funding from our local authority in 2020-21.



Then and now: Dentistry



Then: NHS dental services

Finding a NHS dentist in Gloucestershire, and throughout the country, has been a challenge for many years. People have frequently asked us for help to find a dentist for routine and emergency dental care.

In addition, over time, we have seen a reduction in NHS specialist dental care services. Special care dentistry is for people who have physical, social or emotional circumstances which prevent them using a high street dentist.

In 2019, we gathered feedback from 78 people to inform the ongoing NHS England Improvement (NHSEI) review of special care dentistry in the south west. NHSEI is due to report on findings from all the local Healthwatch involved in the project and to advise of next steps.



Now: Dentistry during the pandemic

During COVID-19, access to dental care quickly became a major area of public concern. NHS and private dental services were temporarily halted and then significantly reduced. Although a joined up solution for NHS emergency dental care was eventually forthcoming, this was not available at the start of the pandemic.

During the year, 22.6% of all the feedback and enquiries we received were about dentistry, and between July and September 2020, over a quarter of all enquiries were about accessing urgent NHS dental care. People could not find an NHS dentist, and a significant number had unresolved or worsening dental issues because they were unable to get treatment through emergency hubs or NHS dentists.



"I was told by a dentist that the waiting lists had over 300 people, so there wouldn't be availability for new patients until at least 2022."



"I was told by NHS 111 to take pain relief but ended up breaking off my own crown to ease the pressure."

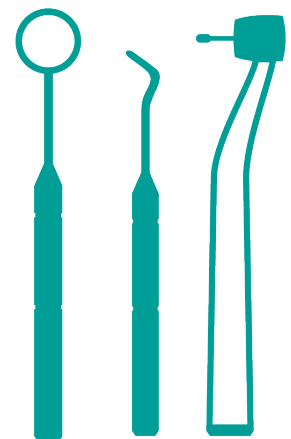
Our findings

We wanted to understand more about the provision of urgent dental care in Gloucestershire, so we carried out a 'mystery shopping' investigation, calling every dental practice in the county.

- 10 dental practices were unreachable, despite trying at least three times.
- Only three were able to provide urgent treatment.
- 14% accurately and helpfully referred to the Gloucestershire Dental Access Centre.
- 40% of calls were under 30 seconds long and staff were harsh in tone.
- 53% of waiting lists were closed, 12% were longer than six months, and 25% of dentists did not know when waiting lists would reopen.
- 10% were very keen to register us as a private patient.

How have we made a difference?

We reported our findings and recommended that NHS commissioners and dentists make provision for people with urgent dental problems. We highlighted the need for clearer information and better communication with the public about reasons for reduced access to NHS dentistry, about urgent dental treatment and the Gloucestershire Dental Access Centre. Our report was featured on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and we had discussions with the local Dentists Association. We presented our findings as part of a NHSEI Dental Reform Programme, and we shared our report with Healthwatch England to inform national review and improvement.



Read our report:

Dental services during COVID-19: Difficulties and delays in accessing dental care in Gloucestershire (September 2020). Visit our website: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Then and now: GP services



Then: Accessing GP services

We know, from the data that we record about public feedback and enquiries, that people have been frustrated for some time about accessing care through their GP.

34% of feedback and enquiries we received last year were about GP practices. Common issues raised were about difficulties getting appointments, the quality and usefulness of GP websites and information, and concerns about the approach of GP surgery staff when dealing with members of the public.



Now: Accessing GP care during the pandemic

The delivery of GP services changed significantly during COVID-19. Initially, health services were limited and, as a fuller service returned, many changes remained, including remote consultations. It became even more important for people to be able to confidently access GP care for non-COVID-19 medical issues.

In November 2020, we asked the public to share their views and experiences of accessing GP services in Gloucestershire over the previous six months, in particular, accessing appointments, digital technology and staff attitude. We gathered feedback from 618 people, via an online survey, focus groups and interviews. We also reviewed 72 GP websites to assess the quality of information and how easy they were to use.

Our findings and recommendations

While new ways of delivering care work well for some people, for many others they present challenges and barriers. Based on our findings we made several recommendations to improve access to GPs services including:

- Offer a choice of methods for consultations and booking appointments (phone, face-to-face, online)
- Simplify the eConsult system and provide a direct messaging alternative
- Continue to use new, simplified prescription ordering practices
- Give patients a smaller timeslot for a GP call-back
- Allow enough time for people to feel listened to
- Make sure websites are useful, up-to-date and easy to use.



"My elderly mother received a letter advising a new system of access was being implemented which was largely IT-based, and she has no IT knowledge at all."



"My GP Practice insists on everyone using eConsult... it is impossible to provide an update without going through the whole rigmarole and answering unnecessary questions."



"Waiting around for hours, not knowing when they are going to ring, can be frustrating."

How have we made a difference?

We sent our report to every Gloucestershire GP Practice Manager and received a positive response. We shared our findings and recommendations for improvement with NHS Gloucestershire CCG; their Head of Digital Transformation shared our report with eConsult to inform service improvement. We will continue to work with the Digital Transformation team as they redesign and commission new services.



"Thank you Healthwatch Gloucestershire for this research... This report, together with other feedback we have collected over the last year, will help us to develop the local primary care offer to our patients into the future." Becky Parish, Associate Director, Engagement and Experience, NHS Gloucestershire CCG

Read our report:

Accessing care through GP Practices in Gloucestershire (February 2021). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Then and now: Mental health A&E



Then: Demand for A&E mental health care

In 2019, we explored local people's views of the county's mental health services. We found that people were unsure where to go to get support for mental health crisis.

For someone dealing with a mental health crisis, hospital A&E is generally a last resort. However, nationally, patients are increasingly visiting A&E to seek the care and support they need (source: NHS Digital, Hospital Accident and Emergency Activity, 2017-18).

In 2018, the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) estimated that in England 5% of all hospital A&E attendances are primarily due to mental ill-health. The HSIB also reported that the approach to assessing mental health conditions in A&E was inconsistent compared to physical conditions, which resulted in missed opportunities to impact positively on health outcomes.



Now: Improving A&E mental health care

Concerns about accessing mental health support in Gloucestershire, particularly for patients in crisis, feature prominently in public feedback. We also know there is a long history of people with mental health challenges having adverse experiences in hospital A&E departments. NHS England Improvement wants mental health care to be at the same standard as physical health services in acute hospitals by 2020-21.


Through a survey and interviews we gathered feedback from 21 people who had recently accessed mental health support through multiple visits to A&E at two Gloucestershire hospitals.

Our findings and recommendations

Key themes emerged which led to several recommendations to help NHS mental health services and other organisations improve support for people in mental health crisis.

- A&E staff should receive regular mental health awareness training.
- A person-centred approach should be adopted when assessing patients.
- Service users' views should be included in improvement and development plans.
- A&E mental health services should be evaluated regularly, including staff feedback to make sure improvements are manageable.
- During the pandemic, the Mental Health Liaison Team conducted 48-hour follow up calls for patients; an evaluation of this service would help understand the impact of this support.


 "A&E risk assessment only looks at immediate risk. It doesn't take account of wider issues of risk and harm."

 "Ongoing support is not something that the patient was given and despite several overdoses ending in him returning to hospital each time, he still has no support and was told by mental health practitioners at the hospital that he isn't depressed."

How have we made a difference?

We shared our findings with Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust and Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHFT). GHFT is using our recommendations to inform ongoing improvements to help put mental health care on a par with physical health care, and we continue to input to the development of Gloucestershire's Mental Health Strategy. A distinct, safe and welcoming space is being created in A&E.



 "The report will be used to strengthen our ongoing improvement in supporting patients with mental health conditions accessing our urgent care services. We recognise there is still more for us to do, and the report gives us some helpful areas to further strengthen our work with patients, their loved ones and our community." Professor Steve Hams, Director of Quality and Chief Nurse, GHFT

Read our report:

Experiences of urgent mental health care in A&E: A Gloucestershire perspective (November 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch Gloucestershire plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped 1,412 people by:

- Providing up-to-date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Supporting the Gloucestershire Community Help Hub response
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Gathering people's feedback and using it to help services support people during the pandemic.

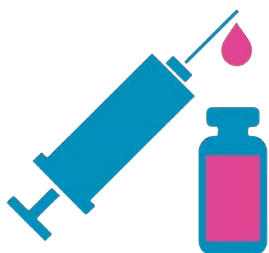
Top five areas that people have contacted us about:



34% on GP services



20% on dental services



12% on COVID-19 vaccinations



3% on patient transport



3% on care at home services






"In the sector, we are pleased to see organisations coming together more and more, and the work of Healthwatch Gloucestershire over the last year has provided us with invaluable insights into the wider issues and experience of people in need of support and care. Hopefully, this will continue to have a positive impact on partnership working and the provision of services for the residents of Gloucestershire." Gloucestershire VCS Alliance



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Healthwatch Gloucestershire is here for you.

-  healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk
-  01452 504989 or 0800 652 5193 (freephone)
-  info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

GP staff ignored COVID-19 procedures

"I had to go to the surgery for a test. The receptionist was wearing a mask, but it was only covering her mouth. A patient wandered around with no mask and no one challenged him; six elderly people were crammed into the small waiting area. I was passed by at least six people, including the Practice Manager, who were not wearing masks... I told (the GP) what had happened, and she told me that there was nothing she could do and that I should speak to Reception or Admin about it. The experience made me feel very vulnerable."

Reluctance to contact GP

"It has been desperately hard at times. I have complex conditions, but I feel as though I shouldn't bother the GP for an appointment, so I have not done. I rang a helpline to talk but did not find this beneficial as it felt like they hurriedly told me to 'take a deep breath', and then wanted to go and answer the next call."

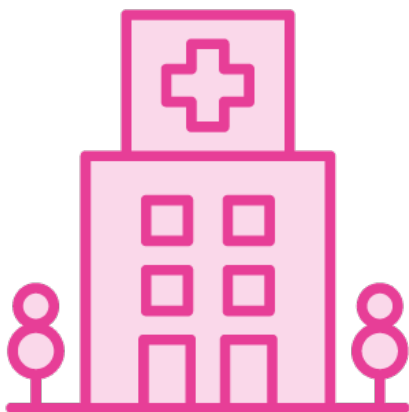
Care concerns during COVID-19

We received a call from a lady who lives two hours away from her 91-year-old father, as she was concerned about the conduct of a local care agency. When her mother was admitted to hospital, her father was left at home alone, totally reliant on carers. His care agency was unable to provide the additional cover he needed, so the reablement team stepped in until another care agency was found. The new agency accepted the contract to provide four visits each day to enable her father to remain safely at home. However, after their first early morning visit, his COVID-19 test results came back positive, and the agency withdrew care. He remained in bed, unable to move and unable to contact anyone.



Unclear COVID-19 shielding advice

"I live alone, I'm nearly 70 and I have diabetes, asthma and kidney disease. My GP told me I would be getting a letter to tell me to stay at home, but I haven't had it. Should I go out to get food and my prescriptions? I'm worried what will happen and I've got nobody to help me."



We put this lady in touch with her community help hub and got her set up with food deliveries and medication delivery.

Praise for vaccination rollout

"Very clear instructions on where to go and next steps which made the whole experience less stressful than expected. Nice seating for wait afterwards. Doctor very clear and concise; good leaflets after provided easy information. Perhaps more access info beforehand."

Using feedback to inform response and recovery


The pandemic required health and social care services to adapt at speed to care for people with the virus, while trying to reduce infections and maintain care for sick and vulnerable people. Changes were made quickly to how services were delivered to local people.




Accessing care during COVID-19

Between April and September 2020, we investigated how the pandemic was affecting people's experiences of care locally. 181 people responded to our online survey, in addition to feedback gathered through enquiries and information requests.

Most feedback was about GPs, followed by hospitals, and there was an even spread about other services. People understood the challenges faced by health and care services and appreciated where services were working well, but there were concerns about delays to treatment and the use of remote consultations, although the benefits were also noted by some.

 "Why are GPs almost hiding away when hospital staff are doing a brilliant job? Not everything can be dealt with over the phone."

 "I was diagnosed with secondary liver cancer just before the lockdown began. Consequently, treatment has been delayed and although chemo has now commenced, only one drug is being used because the second one is considered too risky at the moment. Can't speak too highly of consultants, nurses etc at the acute hospital trust."

Read our report

Gloucestershire health and social care - Six months of COVID-19: What local people told us (November 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Being a carer during COVID-19

We identified that carers, paid and unpaid, were being significantly affected by the pandemic and we wanted to understand their experiences.

In June 2020, we held focus groups and one-to-one interviews. We heard from 20 unpaid carers, including young carers, and four paid carers who look after clients with complex needs in their own homes. We reported on the additional challenges they faced and we heard how they were helping themselves and those they care for to adapt and cope.



"I finished a 16-hour shift and went to a supermarket... to shop using one of the key worker slots. I was turned away because I didn't have an NHS badge. I felt humiliated and cried when I got home."



"I have embraced Zoom and it has given me access to the outside world and a lifeline."

Read our report

Care during Covid-19: A carers perspective (September 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Living with a long-term health condition

People living with long-term health conditions can be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and the disruption it has caused to their everyday life and care.

Between August and October 2020, we ran a survey, carried out interviews and held a focus group with people recovering from a stroke. We heard from 41 people about the limitations placed on their lives, the disruption to their usual care, and how the pandemic compounded their sense of isolation and affected their wellbeing.



"Overall, my family are concerned that serious health conditions are no longer being managed effectively which will either mean earlier death, or the need for further NHS intervention that would otherwise not be necessary."

Read our report

Living with a long-term health condition in COVID-19 - what local people told us (December 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications

How have we made a difference?

During this exceptionally challenging time we gave people the opportunity to speak about their experiences to influence how health and care services are delivered. We shared our reports with local NHS and social care providers to help them understand how to support people with diverse needs, now and in the future, as new models of care are developed. We shared our findings with Healthwatch England to inform change nationally.



"Healthwatch Gloucestershire reports have been really well received, with programme managers and commissioning leads recognising the value added by the insights captured."
Becky Parish, Associate Director, Engagement and Experience, NHS Gloucestershire CCG



John, Healthwatch Gloucestershire volunteer and board member

Volunteers

At Healthwatch Gloucestershire we are supported by 50 volunteers. They help us find out what people think is working well, and what improvements people would like to make to local health and care services.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Conducted Readers Panel reviews and website reviews to improve public information produced by local health and social care services.
- Gathered feedback about local health and social care services that had been posted online.
- Represented Healthwatch Gloucestershire and the voice of local people at strategic and community based virtual meetings.



Sarah

Volunteering while studying Public Health

"I started volunteering at the height of the pandemic in March 2020. I am studying for a master's degree in Public Health and I am a qualified Radiographer. I wanted to do something positive that fitted in with family life and my studies. My first tasks involved collecting feedback from patients attending local GP surgeries, but I progressed to critiquing patient information literature and being part of an insight panel helping shape plans for a new medical school. Volunteering has exceeded my expectations." Sarah

A rewarding learning experience

"I wanted to learn more about healthcare to aid my university studies. As part of my volunteer role, I have been able to collect feedback about many different health and social care facilities as well as helping with research. I have found this experience so rewarding as I know the work I do will be used to make health and social care better for everyone." Emily



Emily



Young Listeners

In Spring 2021, we began recruiting young volunteers aged 16 to 24 to lead and deliver our new Young Listeners project. They will engage with other young people from across Gloucestershire, listening to their health and social care experiences and gathering their ideas on how services could work better for young people.

Read more about the project on our website:
healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/project/young-listeners/



"NHS partners of the One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System, have continued to enjoy a positive working relationship with Healthwatch Gloucestershire this year. Highlights include work of the Readers Panel in the development of public communications to support the 'Fit for the Future' consultation." Becky Parish, Associate Director, Engagement and Experience, NHS Gloucestershire CCG



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch with Healthwatch Gloucestershire.

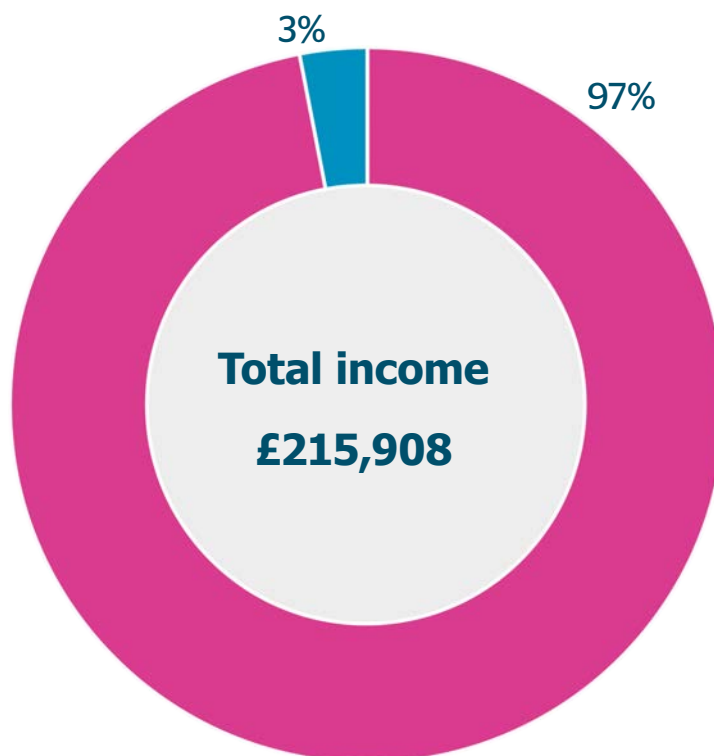
- 🌐 healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk
- ☎ 01452 504989 or 0800 652 5193 (freephone)
- ✉ volunteering@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority, Gloucestershire County Council, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

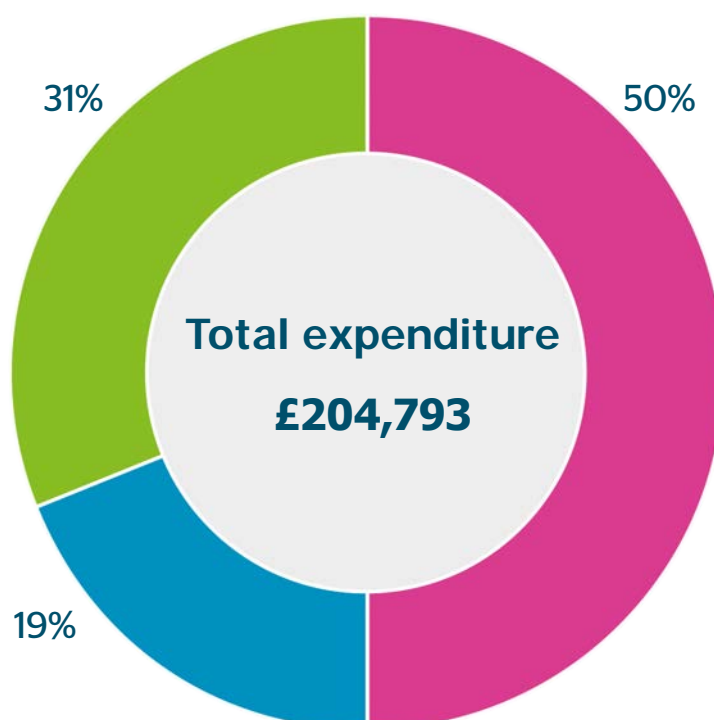
Income

- Funding received from local authority £209,908
- Additional income £6,000 (Healthwatch England project on remote health monitoring)



Expenditure

- Staff costs £102,631
 - Operational costs £39,190
 - Support and administration £62,972*
- * Central support services include research and insight, HR, finance and communications.



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Gloucestershire, 13c Wheatstone Court, Davy Way, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AQ.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. The registered office is at: Unit 2, Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH

Healthwatch Gloucestershire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Gloucestershire Board consists of nine members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020-21 the board met 11 times and made decisions on matters such as key projects to be undertaken by the Healthwatch Gloucestershire team, operational priorities, our response to COVID-19, and our ratings in the Healthwatch England Quality Framework self-assessment.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use insight gathered from information and signposting enquiries across the year to identify key areas of focus for our future project work and to inform our response to emerging issues. We also work closely with partner organisations and stakeholders to understand their priorities and areas of focus to ensure public feedback informs service development and improvements. For example, in 2020, in response to public feedback, we investigated people's concerns about access to GP care and NHS dentistry, and we made several recommendations for improvement.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's views and experience

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020-21 we have been available by phone and email, we provided a feedback form and online surveys on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, holding a BSL interpreted focus group with members of the deaf community in partnership with the Gloucestershire Deaf Association. We have also regularly linked with Gloucestershire Carers' Hub to understand the experiences of carers, whose voices are often unheard in the system.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and announce this via press, social media and our monthly news bulletin. We will also provide hard copies on request and share these with people at any events we attend.



2020-21 priorities

Project/activity area	Changes made to services
COVID-19 information to the public (see pp.12-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New central web page hosted by Gloucestershire CCG with comprehensive information about NHS services across the county. • Hospitals issued guidance for people about what COVID-19 measures to expect when attending appointments.
Dentistry (see p.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved messaging and information about accessing urgent dental care. • Established an ongoing relationship with NHSEI in their review of dental provision and commissioning.
Mental health A&E (see p.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is developing a mental health strategy. • Feedback is being used in the redesign of Emergency Departments. • A joint Hospital/Health and Care Trust group has been tasked with producing a delivery plan against our report recommendations, meanwhile reviewing training, the model of triage used, KPIs for the mental health liaison team and funding for improvements to the Emergency Department interview room.
GP services (see p.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire CCG asked eConsult provider to directly address all our issues and recommendations. • We will be working with the CCG on digital health going forward.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We had one provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by Healthwatch Gloucestershire to the Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations. However, we regularly share our anonymised data, reports and recommendations with Healthwatch England so that these can be fed into the national picture.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is represented on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board by Nikki Richardson, Chair of Healthwatch Gloucestershire. During 2020-21 our representative effectively carried out this role by attending all the meetings. Our key message has been to make sure that the voice of local people is effectively heard and responded to during the significant changes in health and care systems and provision.

Next steps

We will continue gathering feedback from the public to make sure that local people's views and experiences are used to drive and support improvements in Gloucestershire's health and care services. We will also help people navigate health and care services through our information and signposting service.

Top priorities for 2021-22


- Care at home services
- Digital health
- Young people's experiences of health and care

As we move out of the pandemic and restrictions lift, we are hoping to re-engage with the community face-to-face. We are also looking forward to setting up a programme of Enter and View visits that will focus on care services. And we will establish a group of Young Listeners who will be out and about to understand the experiences of young people through our new peer engagement project.

We will follow up our work on mental health services in Gloucestershire, to see how our previous work is making a difference. We will also continue to keep a close eye on GP services, including working alongside digital health commissioners locally as they shape the digital health offer to support patients.

Health inequalities have become increasingly evident over the last year and we will be looking carefully at barriers to health and social care as well as the wider wellbeing agenda.

The health and care world remains unpredictable as we emerge from COVID-19, so we are making sure that we build in time and resources so that we can be flexible in our work to support the people of Gloucestershire as the need arises.

 "We are looking at a world that is very different to the world 18 months ago. It is vital that people engage with us so that we understand what changes have happened, what is important now and what people would like to happen next. As an active part of the wider health and care system, we are well placed to bring about the change that people want to see." Helen Webb, Healthwatch Gloucestershire Manager



Share your views with us

Tell us about a recent health or social care experience, or share your views about local services to help make care better. Get in touch. Healthwatch Gloucestershire is here for you.

- 🌐 healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk
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Thank you

Thank you to everyone helping us put people at the heart of health and social care in Gloucestershire, including:

- **Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.** Thanks for answering our questions and for sharing your feedback. Every time somebody talks to us, we can fulfil our duty to be the voice of the people.
- **Our amazing staff and volunteers.** We could not do our work without our brilliant volunteers who have worked so hard for us.
- **The voluntary organisations who have supported and contributed to our work.** As part of the voluntary and community sector in Gloucestershire, we are always indebted to the amazing organisations and networks who link with us and help to make a difference.
- **Our partners.** Particular thanks go to:
 - ◇ Gloucestershire NHS Hospitals Foundation Trust for being collaborative and positive
 - ◇ Gloucestershire NHS CCG's Engagement and Experience Team for their continued support
 - ◇ Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust.



"I'd like to offer my sincere thanks to the Board for their time and commitment to this voluntary role; their expertise and experience is highly valued. Thanks must also go to Helen and her team and all the volunteers who make an amazing contribution to the work of our local Healthwatch. Looking forward, the coming months will no doubt present further challenges to the system, but I feel assured that you will continue to engage, challenge and support to ensure that services in the county reflect the needs of the people and communities they serve." Helen Flitton, Head of Commissioning (Drugs and Alcohol and Domestic Abuse), Gloucestershire County Council

healthwatch

Gloucestershire

local health and social care shaped by you

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